

A TRIBUTE TO DAVID BEDFORD

Tuesday, 20 February 2018

With David Bedford's passing recently, and after talking with him before he left us, it brought back memories of the five years I spent in the Electricity Corporation of NZ with a range of quality colleagues, none better than David. I enjoyed the time very much indeed and it was greatly helped by working with him.

The industrial relations challenges got severe at times and David was always wise and considered and had splendid intuition about when to settle or when to push on with negotiations as we went through the huge changes of the 1980s and 1990s.

I always had total confidence in his judgement which is praise indeed.

I guess that was then reflected in David joining me at Telecom for another round, one which during the time we were there together was very successful.

David made a massive and positive contribution to the transformation of both ECNZ and Telecom into such successful commercial entities and he epitomised what high quality industrial and human resource relations are all about, examples which have been imitated elsewhere but which can be too easily forgotten, as subsequent governments have sometimes done.

I appreciated hugely David's wise counsel over the years we worked together and his fine leadership talents which he shared so generously and unselfishly with his colleagues. He had a gift for nurturing young people. Those around him benefitted not only from his professionalism but also from his gift for friendship and good relationship building. David always brought deep insight into the problems we faced and his integrity was of the highest order.

And he had the great bonus of being a real pleasure to work with.

Dame Margaret Bazley speaks of those same talents and how much she and her colleagues gained from having him as part of their team at ECAN. So I can pleasingly take some credit for the inspired idea to suggest to her that David would be ideal in working with her on the post-earthquake restructurings in Canterbury. I was delighted when he took over from her as Chairman of Environment Canterbury.

David was a fine person and all his friends and colleagues will miss him greatly. He loved his wife Sandra and his son Sam deeply and our warmest thoughts are with them as they cope with the loss of this wonderful man. He made a splendid contribution to New Zealand.

Sir Roderick Deane,
Wellington